

MULTIMEDIA



UNIVERSITY®

STUDENT ID NO

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# MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

## FINAL EXAMINATION

TRIMESTER 3, 2016/2017 SESSION

**PWC1810 – WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION**  
(Distance Education)

26 MAY 2017  
9.00 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.  
(2 Hours)

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### INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

1. This question paper consists of **FOUR** printed pages with **2** sections.
2. Answer **ALL** Sections.
3. Write all your answers in the Answer Booklet provided.

**SECTION A: CASE STUDY [30 MARKS]****Question 1 [15 marks]**

**Instructions:** Read the following case and answer the questions that follow.

Jennifer was frustrated. She had submitted her contribution to the software project on which she was working electronically to her team four days ago and had heard nothing from anyone since. Enough was enough. She keyed in the message: "Are you all not in the assignment anymore?" and pressed the Send key.

In fact, in the past three months, Jennifer estimated that she accounted for more than 50 percent of the communications for the team. This lack of responsiveness was one of the challenges of working in a virtual team, with members scattered around the globe. Jennifer was part of a project management team responsible for creating smartphone apps that would be compatible with phone technologies used around the world. Team members were located in Asia, Europe, and North America. Although they work for the same company, Tek Tron, their native languages were different as well as their cultural values. The latter created challenges in regard to team members' expectations about communication, time, and relationship.

These differences and their effect on the team had also led Jennifer to believe that she could not rely on her team members.

- i. Why do you think Jennifer used email to communicate with her team members? Give **TWO** reasons (2 marks)
- ii. Suggest **THREE** possibilities that could have contributed to Jennifer's team not responding to her emails. (3 marks)
- iii. Since her team members were not responding, Jennifer decides to communicate with her team members via video conferencing. State **TWO** challenges that Jennifer might face using this channel of communication. (2 marks)
- iv. Jennifer's team members are from Asia, Europe and North America. Give **TWO** differences for low and high context communicators for each of the following terms:
  - a. Communication style (4 marks)
  - b. Time (4 marks)

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**Question 2 [15 marks]**

**Instructions:** Read the following case and answer the questions that follow.

General Motors is recognized for being one the largest car and truck manufacturers in the world, and holds the reputation for one of America's leading car and truck brands. However, in the past years General Motors has been in an ignition-switch crisis as the result of 87 deaths due to faulty ignition switches engineered in their Chevy Cobalts. The allegations rose just weeks after Mary Barra was appointed as the company's new and first female CEO. Since the issue has come to light, Barra has been the figurehead of a full investigation as to the source of the recall and the results are pointing to issues within the company culture.

The most notable issues discovered in the investigation were communication and risk-management, and Barra describes the communication barrier as 'silos' within the company. Barra intends to remove these 'silos' by opening lines of communication between departments, and her first priority is creating lines of reporting between the engineers and their supervisors. Somewhere within the organization's structure lines of communication were not connected, which have had serious consequences on the quality and safety of the vehicles produced.

The investigation has revealed that engineers and managers from General Motors were aware of the faulty ignition switches as far back as 2001, but the first recall was not implemented until 2005. However, the lack of action to recall cars known to have the faulty ignition switches was not deemed as an intentional cover-up but instead was a result of poor reporting and prolonged instances of managers "working in isolation." Documents provided to Congress revealed that employees who knew of the ignition switches decided not to pursue the problem further because of the costs that would incur switching all of the current engine switches and redesigning new switches.

With no one closely monitoring safety procedures or holding operations managers accountable, instances such as faulty-ignition switches going unreported occurred. Documentation of the issue revealed that employees within each department had pieces of the story in regard to the defective parts, but lack of communication and information prevented any one employee from taking action and reporting the problem.

General Motors will attempt to prevent further quality and safety issues through the implementation of an operations risk-management team that will serve to evaluate current practices and procedures within the manufacturing of GM's vehicles. It will also ensure that critical information from the engineering department will reach top management, and will create clear-cut lines of reporting for the engineer's supervisors. Supervisors and management will be held more accountable for the work that is done under their watch, and the operations risk-management team could provide feedback to supervisors in regards to performance management.

However, the most important purpose of this committee will be to monitor how top-managers handle the issues that are brought to them by their subordinates, and it will act as a "conscious" for the company. This incident serves as a hard lesson-learned for GM and Ms. Barra, and will stand as the ultimate reminder that open communication within a company's structure is vital to the firm's quality and performance.

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- i. Based on the case study, how will Mary Barra improve the flow of communication within General Motors? (2 marks)
- ii. From the case study, provide **ONE** example of horizontal communication flow in General Motors. (1 mark)
- iii. State **THREE** factors that had blocked the flow of communication in General Motors. (3 marks)
- iv. State **TWO** formal channels of communication the employees could have used to report the faulty switch. (2 marks)
- v. What are the **THREE** potential benefits for the employees of General Motors once the internal communication is connected? (3 marks)
- vi. Suggest **FOUR** ways the top management, engineers and supervisors are able to handle issues brought by the subordinates and act 'conscious' for the company. (4 marks)

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**SECTION B: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION QUESTION [30 MARKS]****Question 1 [15 marks]**

**Instructions:** Write a memo of about 200 words based on the scenario below.

You work as a customer service manager at Supa Electronics. The company's long-distance and cellphone bills have been skyrocketing. The company's sales representatives make calls to close deals or persuade hard sales. However, you are not sure that the cost of these calls is worth the return.

Write a **memo** to all sales reps proposing a plan on decreasing the number of calls.

You may invent any other necessary details.

**Question 2 [15 marks]**

**Instructions:** Write a letter of about 200 words based on the information below using the **fully blocked format** and **open punctuation**.

You work for Zanatt Pharmaceutical Company. You receive a complaint letter from one of your regular customers who had purchased her drug online. However, she had not received her purchase and when she followed the delivery service online she found that it had not been sent after she had been promised a delivery within two days. The delay of the product has caused her blood pressure and cholesterol level to increase rapidly, making her feel nauseated and weak; leading to absentism at work. She has now requested a refund on all expenses incurred in the process of the purchase; the price of the product, the credit card purchase deduction together with postal charges for the delivery of the product totaling to an amount of RM325.75. This is the third time she has registered a complaint with your company due to the company's inefficiency.

Write a **reply** to the customer responding to her claims by composing a formal apology letter. Include all necessary details

**End of Paper**